

U.S. Department of Labor

Mine Safety and Health Administration
1100 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209-3939



MAR 19 2009

Dear Metal and Nonmetal Mine Operators and Contractors:

I am writing to make you aware of the disturbing number of orders of withdrawal issued for violations of miner training standards. From October 1, 2008, to the present, metal and nonmetal inspectors have issued 279 orders of withdrawal for untrained miners.

As you are aware, training is the key element in the prevention of mining injuries and fatalities. It is also the law. In 2008, the Metal/ Nonmetal mining industry achieved a record low of 22 fatalities, along with a record low incident rate for nonfatal injuries. Improving training programs will help in our continuing efforts to prevent injuries and fatalities.

Please review your training programs to ensure compliance with the requirements of Part 46 and Part 48. Ensure that your training programs adequately address the requirements for new miners, newly hired experienced miners, annual refresher training, new task training, and site-specific hazard awareness training. If you need assistance, please contact the MSHA State Grant program located in your state. Contact information for all three of these resources can be found at the MSHA's website at www.msha.gov. Click on Education and Training under, "Find IT! In DOL" located on the right side of the homepage and scroll down to "Who to Contact."

If you have any questions about training, or any other mine safety and health issue, please contact your local MSHA District office. Together we can achieve our goal of sending every miner home safe and healthy at the end of each shift.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neal Merrifield".

Neal Merrifield
Acting Administrator for
Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health